In the Torah reading this shabbat, Parashat Hayyei Sarah (Genesis 23), Abraham suffers the loss of his wife Sarah. We read, ויבוא אברהם לספוד לשרה ולבכותה - Abraham came to mourn for Sarah and cry for her.

But then Abraham has to begin negotiations to find a burial plot for his wife Sarah. He approaches his neighbors, the Hittites, and says גר ותושב אנכי עמכם - I am a stranger and resident alien in your midst. Will you sell me a grave so I can bury my wife?

And they respond to him -- נסיא אלוקים אתה בטוחו - "Abraham, you may think of yourself as a stranger and resident alien, but to us, you are a leader. In fact, you are raised up by God! We hold you in high esteem!"

Well, if you read to the end of this passage, it turns out that the Hittites don’t end up holding him in high esteem - but Rabbi Harold Kushner has long used these two phrases to describe two different ways that Jews and others understand the Jewish community.

Sometimes, Jews see ourselves, or are seen by others, as strangers and resident aliens, not really belonging, not really accepted. And often persecuted and oppressed. And sometimes Jews see ourselves, or are seen by others, as leaders, those raised up, even respected for having a special relationship with God, fully welcomed into the societies in which we live, and having a responsibility to shape those societies.

And here’s the challenge: both were true about Abraham, and both are true about every Jewish community in Jewish history.

The assailant on Shabbat thought of Jews as interlopers who don’t belong, who are pulling the strings to create every disadvantage for the people he regards as authentic Americans; who are even perpetrating a genocide against European-Americans. And his words and acts of violence are in sad continuity with thousands of years of antisemitic words and acts of violence (Continued on p.2)
And just as his words and acts of violence are in sad continuity with the history of antisemitism, they are also in sad continuity with hundreds of years of American home-grown racism and nativism, that labels various people including Jews as dangerous outsiders. Just confining ourselves to attacks on people at prayer: In recent years we have seen hate-filled murderous attacks on African-American Christians at prayer in Charleston; on Muslims at prayer in Quebec City; on Sikhs at prayer in Wisconsin -- all perpetrated by white supremacists. And had the Pittsburgh attack not happened, we would all be talking more about the Petersburg Kentucky attack, in which two people were murdered by yet another white supremacist solely because they are African-American -- and because the gunman was not able to get into the African-American church that was his real target.

And even in the week since this terrible incident, we have seen hateful slogans painted on a synagogue in Irvine CA; we have seen swastikas painted on a synagogue on Thursday in Brooklyn Heights; we have seen a dramatic escalation of antisemitic chatter on social media celebrating last shabbat’s attack. One result is that many of us can feel flashbacks to earlier times in Jewish history. How painful it is for me to hear more than one person say to me: “I am just glad that my (parent; grandparent; other relative) did not survive to see this happen in the United States.”

One of my friends asked: “Will the American Jewish community come to look back at this event as our Kristallnacht? As you may know, this week (early November 2018) we commemorate the 80th anniversary of Kristallnacht, referred to in German as Reichspogromnacht, the terrible Night of Broken Glass in 1938 that marked the beginning of the Shoah period. For many German Jews, Kristallnacht was a wake-up call that the Jewish experience under the Nazis would be just as bad or worse than they had feared. So my friend asks: is this Kristallnacht?

My answer is clear. Let’s look at some of the differences. During Kristallnacht, the police were on the side of the assailants, providing no protection to the Jewish homes, synagogues, institutions and businesses that were destroyed. Whereas this week, four police officers are still in the hospital because of the bullets that they took as they subdued the assailant. This week, even before the incident had been reported on the news, our own Chief of Police in Hoboken was informed and sent officers immediately to protect our synagogue and to send a message that they are standing by us.

During Kristallnacht, the Jews were isolated. And this week, hundreds of thousands of people of all faiths and no faith came out to stand by the Jewish community in communities around the country - plus many more this shabbat. On Monday night, October 29, less than 72 hours after the incident, our sanctuary was full to overflowing -- we had political leaders, as well as religious leaders representing Catholic, Protestant, Muslim, and Sikh communities, standing with us, standing up to hate, proclaiming that what happened in Pittsburgh is the opposite of what is supposed to happen in a sanctuary, in a house of worship. And that they treasure us for the ways we are different - as we treasure them for the ways they are different. And they know that in similar circumstances we have stood up for them. (By the way: when people ask me why I spend so much of my time focused on interfaith cooperation activities -- part of the answer is that I feel that Jewish ethics and values demand this of me, but part of the answer is that there’s an element of self-interest. Truly, planning Monday night’s event did not take just 2 days -- it took several years of building and nurturing relationships.)

And you should see - - the bouquets of flowers, the envelopes of letters and notes from our neighbors’ churches, some of which I have reprinted on the sheets that have been distributed; the posters outside our neighboring houses of worship that announce prayers for the Jewish community; the Pittsburgh Gazette front page headline that reads in Aramaic in Hebrew letters - יניקת החיים - the opening words of the Mourner’s Kaddish. (That’s the kind of ‘dog whistle’ that I can get behind).

I do long for a time when it could simply be expected that all political leaders would have the agenda of uniting the nation, especially at times of tragedy - helping us to come together and sense a common purpose rather than to sow division. Not all political leaders today are interested in or capable of doing this, and we could use some help in forging more unity. But apparently, when necessary, we know how to make the unity ourselves.

Sometimes we feel like the stranger or alien - but at other times we realize that in this society we are already citizens of all nations - nesi elohim be-tokheinu - we are treasured and raised up. We are a proud part of the mosaic of this country, sharing in the responsibility for its present and future.

And if we are both the strangers and the treasured ones -- it means we need to be vigilant but not afraid. It means that we will NOT stop gathering in synagogues. We will NOT stop practicing Jewish values as we understand them. We will NOT stop emulating Abraham who welcomed strangers into his tent. We will NOT stop fulfilling the Torah’s commandment to love the stranger, for we were strangers in the land of Egypt.

And…. We will NOT stop emulating Cecil and David of blessed memory, who would invite people every week into their spiritual home. We will NOT stop emulating Jerry and Richard and Bernice and Joyce of blessed memory, generous healers and sensitive teachers. We will NOT stop emulating Rose and Sylvan and Daniel and Melvin and Irving of blessed memory, who built and sustained families and communities where the traditions of their ancestors could be passed on.
**THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS**

**General Fund**
- Ann Blaustein in honor of the little girl who delivered special treats to a senior on Mitzvah Day
- Michael and Rachel Boufford
- Ceil Chait
- Alan Welner and Diana London in memory of the Etz Chaim victims, and in honor of HIAS

**Rabbi’s Discretionary Fund**
- Janet Bohnen
- Ceil Chait in memory of Irwin Rosenfeld; beloved husband, father and grandfather
- Barry and Julie Weinstein in memory of Ita Sima Moss

**Refugee Support Committee Fund**
- Louise Kurtz

**Meistrich Speaker/Brunch Series**
- Matt Meistrich

**THANK YOU FOR SPONSORING KIDDUSH:**
- 11-3 Matthew Cheng and Talya Schaeffer; Gregory Mark and Debbie Greenberg and David Swirnoff and Merry Firschein
- 11-10 Ron Weiss and Debra Sklar Weiss in honor of Jascha’s bar mitzvah
- 11-17 Steven and Trixie Saporta in honor of David’s bar mitzvah
- 11-24 Amanda Grant

**CONGRATULATIONS TO:**
- Jascha Weiss on his bar mitzvah and to his parents, Ron Weiss and Debra Sklar Weiss and to his sister, Julia
- David Saporta, on his bar mitzvah and to his parents, Steven and Trixie Saporta
- T.J. Schiffer on his conversion to Judaism
- Alex and Amy Baviford, KPS parents, on the birth of their son Remington James and to his brother Max

**CONDOLENCES TO:**
- Lauren Calmas on the loss of her sister, Robin Carr and to Lauren’s husband, Steve and their children, Sam and Aly

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**YOM KIPPUR GIFT MATCH AVAILABLE UNTIL DECEMBER 31**

We are in our final weeks to make a tax-deductible Yom Kippur gift in support of USH’s critical mission to provide you and your family the most meaningful access to Jewish prayer, education and connection.

Until December 31, a generous donor from the USH community will match your new or renewed support by half. Please take advantage of this opportunity to increase your impact and to make a difference in your USH community, by making a gift today.

**Thank you to our generous donors who have already made a contribution this 5779.**

**How to Give**
- Online: [https://www.hobokensynagogue.org/donate.html](https://www.hobokensynagogue.org/donate.html)
- Call: (201) 659-4000
- Check: (payable to “United Synagogue of Hoboken”) 115 Park Avenue Hoboken, NJ 07030

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**By the time you receive this issue,** Hanukkah will have begun. **The Festival of Lights** is also known as the Festival of Dedication (“Hanukkah” being Hebrew and Aramaic for dedication). The idea being that the temple was rededicated, cleaned and prepared for reuse after being under the control of the Greeks. So, on behalf of the membership and everyone in our community, I hope you’ll consider rededicating yourself in terms of your relationship with, and participation in, USH.

I’m not talking about membership. I’m not talking about participation in spiritual studies or religious practices. I’m talking about finding something at USH (and KPS and The Learning Center) that you want to be active in (whether classes, services or social events) and jumping into it. This means participating, but it also means volunteering your time.

Unlike some synagogues, we rely on our members to help make things happen. Rabbi Scheinberg is a spiritual leader and a teacher, but so many different parts of the services are led by our members. And the organization of 99% of the social events (from parties to movies to lectures to Casino Night) is done by volunteers.

If you haven’t had a chance, I urge you to look back at the November issue of the Shofar and read my article on volunteering. I urge you to find something on that list that you’d like to be a part of. Something that you’re able to help with. And please email our volunteer coordinator (volunteer@hobokensynagogue.org) and find out what you can do to help.

As we enjoy the holiday season (both traditional Jewish and secular), I hope you’ll find a place for USH in your schedule. We want to continue to give you a meaningful place to join friends and family. And I hope you’ll be able to dedicate just a bit of your time to help with that goal.

May you have a happy and healthy New Year as we move into 2019 together.

*Shalom,*  David
From his photography studio perched high on the cliffs, Joe Epstein surveys all of Hoboken, which is laid out for him below like a map with Manhattan as the backdrop. From here, as well as on location, he photographs the people, the culture, the history and the events of our vibrant and exciting community.

Joe’s portfolio includes many scenes of Hoboken, Jersey City, and New York City. He is drawn to the people, the architecture, and the sprawling landscapes of buildings. He explains that, “Capturing the image is only part of the process. The computer and memory card may have replaced the chemicals of the darkroom, but my values have not changed. I painstakingly edit each image, bringing to print what I viewed through the lens. Over the years I have refined my technique and trained my eyes to see the world in a unique way. My images go beyond the basics, displaying a vision blended of light, motion, and viewpoint.”

Joe has spent his entire career behind the lens, but it all began as a youngster at Jewish summer camp and then at school recording 7th and 8th grade events and creating the high school yearbook for his high school in Flemington, New Jersey.

After college Joe worked as the photographer for the local Flemington newspaper and then as a photographer and ultimately as photo editor of the Star-Ledger newspaper, the biggest paper in New Jersey. Eventually Joe branched out on his own and he is now the photographer of choice at numerous corporate and community events in the Hoboken area. Joe's work has been exhibited in local galleries and fine art shows throughout Metropolitan New York and more recently he was commissioned to photograph for luxury residential development in New Jersey. Joe's award-winning photos have been recognized by the New York Press Photographers Association, the New Jersey Press Association, New England Press Association, and the Pennsylvania Newspaper Association, and were part of The Star-Ledger's work that won the Pulitzer Prize.

Joe grew up in a very religious Jewish household in Flemington, where his father led the services, with other volunteers, in a small, informal “breakaway” Conservative shul. After his bar mitzvah, and having played the trumpet in middle school, Joe became his synagogue’s shofar blower and he has since followed that passion. Indeed, he relishes any opportunity to participate in a contest for who can blow the “Tekiah Gedolah” final blast for the longest time. He claims that his record is 41 seconds, but that was when he was much younger.

After college in Ithaca, Joe returned to the Flemington area, and continued to be involved with the synagogue, where his father served as religious chairman and his mother organized many events. But as time passed, the membership declined and once the congregation merged with another synagogue, he didn't feel at home any longer.

But everything changed when he took a fateful ski trip with friends to Killington, Vermont. For it was on the ski slope there that he met his beloved wife, Lynn Danzker.
At the time Lynn had begun the process to adopt her son, Cole, from a small village outside of Moscow, Russia where he resided in a State-run orphanage. Joe and Lynn married in a civil ceremony right after Cole came to the United States, so that Joe could become Cole’s adoptive – and very loving – father.

Lynn lived in Hoboken and was a member of USH, and so Joe visited our synagogue with her. Once he did, he says, “I felt an instant connection. I finally felt at home again about my connections to Judaism.” “The way that Rabbi Scheinberg conducts the service reminds me of the Judaism that I loved in the small shul in Flemington where I grew up.”

Nonetheless, for Joe’s first Purim at USH, he got all dressed up, assuming that that was what was expected. Entering the building, he immediately saw Rabbi Rob dressed as a clown, adorned in a huge multicolored wig, and a white face with a bright red nose, and lots of members in all kinds of crazy costumes. He was astonished, loved it and was completely hooked. He and Lynn were thrilled that Rabbi Scheinberg oversaw Cole’s conversion to Judaism and then officiated at their Jewish wedding ceremony.

Since then they have been committed enthusiastic members of the USH and have brought many family members and friends to join them at innumerable services and other events. Last year they were absolutely thrilled to celebrate Cole’s bar mitzvah at USH.

Joe is a warm and giving person who gives freely of his time to support a host of good causes, often as a photographer to record special community and charitable events but also in many other ways. He speaks with great emotion about 9-11. Having been a volunteer emergency medical technician (EMT) for many years, on that terrible day he worked not only as a photographer but also on the Rescue Squad. Throughout the following days and weeks, he was at Ground Zero with the Port Authority Police unobtrusively recording the heroic work being done to locate remains and commence some of the clean-up work. It took him many years thereafter before he could return to the area.

He and Lynn do an enormous amount of volunteer work with the World Wide Orphan Foundation (WWO), founded by Cole’s renowned pediatrician, Dr. Jane Anderson. WWO’s mission is to transform the lives of orphans and vulnerable children through access to medical care, education and psychosocial support so they can become healthy, independent, and productive members of their community and the world.

USH is so very fortunate that Joe Epstein is a key member of our community. We are very thankful that Lynn agreed to his invitation to ride the ski lift with him all those years ago.✨
For Chanukkah candle lighting instructions, blessings and music, see rabbischeinberg.com

HAPPY CHANUKKAIH!
USH relies on its members and friends to help keep our community vibrant, organized, and on the cutting edge of cultural, educational, and spiritual programming. No matter your talent, interest, profession, or availability, you and your family are bound to find a meaningful way to contribute your time to our community. Here are just some of the volunteer opportunities available in our community. Contact the office for more information about any of these opportunities and we'll steer you to the right person!

**If you like to plan events...**
- Join the Casino Night Committee
- Pitch in or chair a winter brunch or lecture series
- Plan an outreach event for young families
- Plan an event for young adults
- Help plan the Film Series
- Host a Shabbat dinner at your home
- Coordinate a dinner at USH

**If you have children...**
- Be a greeter at Shabbat in the Park
- Coordinate a Family Friday Shabbat
- Chaperone a Learning Center field trip
- Do "in reach" communication for new members with young children
- Help with PJ Library

**If you have a few hours...**
- Volunteer on Mitzvah Day
- Assemble and deliver Mishloach Manot on Purim
- Sponsor kiddush
- Greet worshippers on Shabbat or during the High Holidays
- Host a Shabbat dinner or My Jewish Neighborhood event
- Volunteer at the USH booth at the Hoboken Art & Music Festival
- Set up for the brunch series or other event
- Help with the membership BBQ
- Serve food at the Shelter during our monthly evenings

**If you are looking for something you can do (mostly) from home...**
- Write! for The Shofar, website or blog
- Contact new and prospective members for the Membership Committee
- Join the 613 Shabbat Committee
- Help the Finance Committee
- Work with the Volunteer Committee
- Host a Shabbat dinner or My Jewish Neighborhood event
- Volunteer at the USH booth at the Hoboken Art & Music Festival
- Set up for the brunch series or other event
- Join our Finance committee

**If you like to work with your hands...**
- Help out in the Building Committee
- Become a stained glass volunteer
- Help build the Sukkah

**If you find meaning from ritual and Jewish study...**
- Lead services or read Torah or Haftarah at one of our services
- Attend a weekday minyan
- Join the Chessed Committee and assist congregants who are sitting shiva
- Lead a study group, or tutor someone looking to learn Hebrew or Jewish knowledge
- Be a resource for Jews by choice and other adults learning about Judaism at a beginner level
- Plan and promote advanced Jewish learning and other learning events

**If you are a performer...**
- Join in the annual Purim Shpiel
- Play a musical instrument at Friday evening services during the summertime
TO:

SUN, DECEMBER 8TH, 8PM

AN INTIMATE EVENING OF STORYTELLING

Join us as professional storytellers Vicki Eastus and Adam Wade as well as fellow USH members entertain us with personal stories that will touch your heart, make you laugh,...

and once or twice think “gee, glad that didn’t happen to me.”

SAT, DEC 8, 8 PM
(INCLUDES HANUKKAH CANDLE LIGHTING & TABLE GAMES)
USH, 115 PARK AVENUE
WINE, BEER AND SNACKS WILL BE SERVED.
ADMISSION: $15 MEMBERS, $20 NON-MEMBERS

In a major work of scholarship both erudite and very funny, Columbia professor Jeremy Dauber traces the origins of Jewish comedy and its development from biblical times to the age of Twitter. Dauber traces the ways Jewish comedy has mirrored, and sometimes even shaped, the course of Jewish history.

Sun., Jan. 13, 2019 $18 for members
10:30 AM - 12:30 PM $25 for nonmembers

JEWISH COMEDY A Serious History

JEREMY DAUBER

BOOK BRUNCH